by TRAI (Amendment) Act, 2000 the power of fixing tariff for telecom services is mandated to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India only and not with the Government.The Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited and the MahanagarTelephone Nigam Limited; the two Service Providers and PSUs of Government of India, have recently reduced dial-up charges for logging on the net.

(b) The local call charges for dial up Internet has been reduced by BSNL and MTNL by 50% between 22.30 hours and 06-30 hours on all days. During this period, the pulse for all Internet local calls originating in BSNL and MTNL networks and made to any Internet Service Provider would be 360 seconds instead of 180 seconds.

(c) No, Sir. As reported by BSNL and MTNL, the reduction of rates during the day time would result in network congestion, causing inconvenience to other users of telephone services. Hence, it was not found feasible to reduce the rates during day time.

Telephone facilities in Rajasthan

236. DR. ABRAR AHMED: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the latest position with regard to telephone facilities and the number of villages in Rajasthan which are yet to be provided with telephone facility;

(b) whether the targets for the year 2002 have been achieved; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) to (c) All villages in Rajasthan do not have telecom coverage at present. As per available information, 15,625 villages are uncovered. The private basic telephone service operator in Rajasthan has provided Village Public Telephone facility in 564 villages so far.